

Alliance of British Cotton Spinners and Slaveholding Cotton Lords to build up "Free Trade."--The West and North to be Victims, and raise cheap food for slaves, but be deprived of a Home Market for their products.

Not by any assertion of ours, but by the testimony of high witnesses, shall this base plot be proven:—"Out of their own mouths shall they be condemned." It is an old but true saying that "murder will out," and the facts we give but verify the old adage anew, while they show how shallow is the pretence of philanthropy and humanity claimed for free trade.

Years ago a book was published in the South, made up of contributions from able and distinguished advocates of the supremacy of slavery, with the significant title, "Cotton is King." Such men as Hammond, Harper, Christy, Stringfellow, Hodge, Bledsoe and Cartwright furnished the articles that made up its 600 pages, each and all advocating in various ways the power, wealth and perpetuity of the slave system, and the editor, E. N. Elliott, LL.D., President of Planters' College, in Mississippi, furnishing an essay on "Slavery in the light of International Law." This remarkable book was published in Augusta, Ga., *and sold only by subscription*, being kept carefully out of the general market, that it might not reach the North, but as carefully put in the way of those it was intended for—the Southern slave-holders. It is an able statement of their plans, theories and aims, and, before the rebellion, was in the libraries of planters, found its way over the Atlantic to English manufacturers, but was rarely seen north of Mason and Dixon's line in this country. From a worn and well-read copy, brought from the house of some slaveholding rebel by a soldier, we extract what is needed to prove the statements at the head of this article. The essay that serves our purpose is on "The Economical Relations of Slavery," by David Christy, of Cincinnati, Ohio, who seems to have been blindly serving cotton at the expense of the corn of his own State. He says, pp. 57, etc., "The economical value of cotton as an agency for supporting and extending slavery has long been understood by statesmen. The discovery of the power of steam, and the inventions in machinery for pre-

paring and manufacturing cotton, revealed the important fact that a single island, having the monopoly secured to itself, could supply the whole world with clothing. Great Britain attempted to gain the monopoly and to prevent other countries from rivaling her. She long prohibited all emigration of skillful mechanics from the kingdom, as well as the exportation of machinery. As country after country was opened to her commerce, the markets for her manufactures extended, and the demand for the raw material increased. * * * The principal articles demanded by this growing commerce have been cotton, coffee and sugar, in the production of which slave labor largely predominated. England could only be a great commercial nation through the agency of her manufactures. She was the best supplied of all the nations with the necessary capital, skill, labor and fuel to extend her commerce by this means, but for the raw material (cotton) she was dependent on other countries."

Thus much for the British policy of monopoly—the same as in the days of 1776, when Lord Chatham said he would not let the American colonists make their own hobnails. But let us follow Mr. Christy, and see how the unholy alliance grew up between these foreign monopolists and the cotton growers of the South, the base offspring of which they *misnamed* free trade. He continues: "The planters of the United States were the most favorably situated for the cultivation of cotton, and while Great Britain was aiming at monopolizing its manufacture, they attempted to monopolize the markets for that staple. This led to the fusion of interests between them and the British manufacturers, and to the adoption of principles of political economy which, if rendered effective, would promote the interests of this coalition. With the advantages British manufacturers possessed, free trade would make all other nations subservient to their interests, and the demand for American cotton would grow with the increase of their operations. * * * To the cotton-planter, the co-partnership has been eminently advantageous. * * * Cotton and tobacco only are largely exported; our sugar production does not equal our consumption, but of the other two staples we export *more than two-thirds* the amount produced, while of other agricultural products (wheat, corn, etc.), *less than a forty-sixth part is exported.*" Yet this cottono-politico economist argued that since Northern farmers can supply planters with food, the more cotton, and the more slavery, the better for them, even while admitting that the Southern policy was to keep prices of grain low for their own benefit, and get rich at the cost of these same farmers.

Let us follow him still further. After stating that cotton was only profitable in the slave labor States, he says: "The attempt of the agricultural States (meaning the North) to establish the 'protective policy' was a struggle to create such a division of labor as would afford a home-market for their pro-

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ducts no longer in demand abroad * * The opposition to the protective tariff in the South arose from two causes; the one, to secure a foreign market for cotton, the other, to get a bountiful supply of provisions at cheap rates. Cotton was admitted free into foreign ports, and Southern statesmen feared its exclusion, if our government increased the duty on foreign fabrics. * * Cheap cotton was essential to the schemes of English manufacturers of supplying the world with cloths. The close proximity of the cotton and provision-growing districts of the United States gave its planters advantage over all others in the world; but they could not monopolize the market, unless they could obtain a cheap supply of food and clothing for their negroes, and thus undersell all rivals in cotton. A manufacturing and mechanical population in the midst of Northern provision-growers, such as the protective policy contemplated, it was thought would increase the price of their products in the home-markets, thus furnished, and if the manufacturing could be prevented and a system of free trade adopted, the South would be the principal provision market of the country, and the rich lands of the North furnish *cheap food for their slaves*. If they could establish free trade, it would insure the American market to foreign manufacturers, secure the foreign market for their cotton, repress home manufactures, force a large number of Northern men into agriculture, multiply the growth and diminish the price of provisions, feed and clothe their slaves at lower rates, produce their cotton at a third or fourth or former prices, and monopolize the trade of Europe in that staple.

But, enough. Here is the plot, fair and frank, as such men—able, selfish, tyrannical, regardless of the rights of free labor, or of the common prosperity of our country, would state it *to each other*; for all this, and much more in this remarkable book, was *not* written for the North, or for the colored man, but for the Southern lords of the lash, and such British manufacturers as choose, for gain in trade, to be their allies. “The economical value of cotton as an agency for supporting and extending slavery,” with free trade to help the evil work. Lovers of liberty, does this command your respect?

How does it suit you, freemen of the North and West? Was it not *patriotic* and *chivalrous* “to insure the American market to foreign manufacturers?” High and generous motives, indeed, prompted the partners in this base alliance to “*force a large number of Northern men into agriculture, multiply the growth and diminish the price of provisions, to feed and clothe their slaves at lower rates!*”

For this have the pioneer farmers of the great West toiled while they should have built up manufactures in their own midst, created a home market and gained higher prices for the fruits of their labor. Thus did the planter hope for wealth, from the toil of the slaves and at the expense of the farmer of the North, who sold him cheap food for his human chattels.

From the plots of these Southern planters and their British helpers came the crafty efforts to stir up bad blood against New England, crying out against "Eastern monopolists" whenever it was proposed to do anything fairly to protect our home industry, and concealing the fact that whatever policy helped manufactures in one section helped them in another, East or West alike. Of course the cotton lords wished to prosper at the expense of both the East and the West, breaking down the manufactures of the one, and cheapening the grain of the other; and English manufacturers wanted the monopoly of our market, and cheap grain from the prairies where supplies nearer home were short.

Thus it was that Jefferson Davis and others, who plotted and led the late rebellion, were free traders. Let none be blinded by the plausible but shallow sophisms of free trade. Slavery is gone, and the interest of labor is one, all over our free land. The mines, and forests, and cotton fields, and waterfalls of the South; the coal and iron beds and rich soil of the West and the Middle States, the skill and experience and mechanism of the East, offer ample scope for the growth of a richly varied industry, giving good employ and fair wages to labor, each part of which shall help all, and all help each, and the skill and power of American workers be ample for the work of America, and for furnishing due share of the wide and varied commerce of the world.

G. B. S.

DETROIT, Mich., January, 1871.